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From: Hayes, Grant
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To: College of Education Faculty and SPA Staff
Subject: NEWS RELEASE Online graduate, undergraduate degree programs at East Carolina University ranked among nation's best

The following news release was distributed today.

NEWS RELEASE

East Carolina University News Services

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Online graduate, undergraduate degree programs at ECU ranked among nation's best

GREENVILLE, N.C. (1/10/2017) - East Carolina University's online bachelor's and master's degree programs have been recognized among the nation's best by U.S. News & World Report.

CU's online graduate programs in business, criminal justice, education and nursing as well as the online bachelor's degrees are listed in U.S. News 2017 Best Online Programs announced Jan. 10.

ECU's online criminal justice graduate program placed the highest in North Carolina and tied for 15th out of 55 schools ranked.

Dr. William Bloss, professor and chair of the criminal justice department, said enrollment in the the master's program has more than doubled since 2014.

Bloss said the ranking "provides further evidence of our commitment to academic excellence by providing the highest quality programming for our students," he said. "Moreover, we are proud to contribute to educating the next generation of criminal justice leaders."

The College of Education's online graduate education programs tied for 16th out of 262 schools and was the highest ranked in the North Carolina system.

"We're very pleased with the national recognition our online education programs continue to receive," said Grant Hayes, dean of the College of Education. "This ranking is truly a testimony to the commitment and hard work of our award-winning faculty and the excellence of our students."

A total of 273 students were enrolled in the following online education programs during the 2016-17 year: adult education, business education, elementary education, instructional technology, science education, reading education, special education and middle grades education.

ECU's College of Nursing programs were ranked 35th out of 140 schools. This fall, 325 students were enrolled in the college's six online graduate options: adult-gerontology clinical nurse specialist, neonatal clinical nurse specialist, neonatal nurse practitioner, nursing education, nursing leadership and nurse midwifery.

"We're thrilled that our online programs once again rank among the best in the nation," said Dr. Sylvia Brown, dean of the ECU College of Nursing. "These programs are a crucial part of what we offer in the College of Nursing, allowing working nurses the opportunity to work toward advanced degrees while continuing to serve their communities."

ECU's online Master of Business Administration program has been recognized by U.S. News since it began ranking graduate-level business distance education programs. ECU's MBA program tied at 86th out of 239 schools in the country.

"All of us, including students, faculty, staff and alumni, take great honor in being ranked once again so highly in this report," said Dr. Stan Eakins, dean of the ECU College of Business. "As the largest business college in North Carolina, we offer future leaders a flexible, high-quality online program that engages and prepares them to meet the dynamic, global needs of business."

The online program in the College of Business has grown from a single course offering in 1998 to undergraduate and graduate degrees in various concentrations. This fall, 700 out of 797 total students in the ECU MBA program enrolled online.

Also this year, ECU's online bachelor's degree programs placed 156th out of 308 schools ranked. ECU – the leading provider of distance education in the UNC system – offers online degree completion programs in various disciplines at the undergraduate level for students who can't take classes on campus due to work and family obligations or geographical barriers.

"Being able to offer online programs enables these students to overcome those hurdles and continue their education," said Jennifer Baysden, associate director for credit programs in the Office of Continuing Studies at ECU. "I believe these rankings show a commitment from not only the faculty, but the entire university, to foster a successful academic experience for the online student."

This fall, approximately 3,300 ECU undergraduate students – more than 10 percent of the student body – took only online courses, according to data from ECU Institutional Planning, Assessment and Research.

To develop the rankings, U.S. News evaluated a combination of areas such as student engagement, faculty credentials and training, student services and technology, peer reputation and admissions selectivity.

The complete listing can be viewed at <http://www.usnews.com/online>.

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